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# FRONTISPIECE TO WINTER VACATION.

*Robert and his obedient pair of Swans.*

*ride page 23*

THE

# WINTER VACATION;

OR,

# Holidays

# IN THE COUNTRY.

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INTENDED FOR

*THE AMUSEMENT OF CHILDREN.*

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# THE WINTER VACATION.

MR. HADFIELD possessed a large farm in the richest part of the county of Essex, which he cultivated with great care. Every season brought him some new employment, so that his time never hung heavily on his hands; consequently he was always cheerful, especially as he lived very happily with his wife, and was blessed with two promising children, a son

and daughter, in whose education he took great interest; for though he was not qualified to teach them Greek or Latin, he had an excelleut understanding, and a great fund of general knowledge. Besides, his aim was to make them good rather than learned. The point he laboured most earnestly to attain, was to teach them to speak the truth strictly; not only in asserting or denying a fact, but in describing, with great exactness, whatever they saw, or relating any circumstance that happened without making it more or less, which people who speak without thinking are very apt to do.

Mrs. Hadfield was a sensible, wor-

*The Thrasher.*

thy woman, who loved her children, and assisted her husband in forming their minds to virtue.

It was the dreary month of December, a deep snow covered the ground, a frost succeeded the fall of snow, and the cold was extreme. The branches of the trees glittered with the hoar frost, and the thick snow that lodged upon them, nodded with the wind like plumes of feathers. The cattle were brought into the straw-yard, for shelter from the inclemency of the weather: they stood trembling near each other, and the big tears rolled down their faces. The little birds were almost frozen to death, and

obliged to seek a scanty meal near the house, in the grains of corn which were scattered on the ground. The robins were more familiar than the others: they ventured even on the step of the door; nay one of them was enticed by the children into the kitchen, by crumbs of bread which they threw for them; and, by repeated visits, grew so tame, that in the following spring he chose a mate, and built a nest in the hole of one of the chamber-windows, made to receive the bar that fastened the shutter.

Robert and Maria were come home for the Christmas holidays; and their father and mother, wishing to give them pleasure, had invited their cou-

sins, Edward and Fanny, who lived in London, to spend a few weeks with them, and partake of the festivity of the season.

These children, having spent all their lives in a close city, were wholly unacquainted with the employments of people in the country. Every object about the farm was a novelty to them. Sometimes they crept into the barn, to watch the threshers, who were beating out the corn with long pieces of wood, joined to other pieces by a strap of leather, which allows the upper part to hang loosely, and by that means strikes out the grains of corn from the chaff that encloses them. This instrument is called a

flail, and though a simple invention, is of great use.

At other times they would observe the men banking up the ditches, and mending the hedges, which, though a common sight to Robert and Maria, afforded them matter of observation.

Mr. Hadfield was of a very benevolent disposition, and loved to see every body happy around him, especially those who spent their strength in labouring for him. It was his custom to entertain all the labourers on the farm with a Christmas feast, to which he invited their wives and children. This was a festival to his whole family. Great preparations were made for this rustic

holiday. Mrs. Hadfield, for several days before, employed Fanny and Maria in assisting her to pick currants, stone raisins, and pare apples for mince-pies—and plum-puddings. The maids were as busy in plucking turkeys and chickens for the parlour; whilst the larder was well provided with pieces of beef for both boiling and roasting.

These preparations being finished, the happy day arrived, and the men, with their families, repaired to the hall, dressed in their best clothes, with cheerful faces and merry hearts. A large wood fire blazed on the hearth, and a long table was set for their reception.

Mr. and Mrs. Hadfield addressed

each one of their guests with the kindest attention, enquiring after their health and the state of their families. One object was more striking than the rest. A very old, decrepid woman, quite blind, led in by a little girl of nine years old, with a most interesting countenance, charmed all beholders, and especially the children, who wished to know their history. It seems this old woman was the mother of John Norton, one of the ploughmen, who had lost his wife, and that she had now no other attendant than this little girl, his daughter, whose gentle care supplied all her wants with the most tender affection. This child was of the sweetest tem-

per, and had, from earliest infancy, been the pattern of obedience to her parents.

Dinner being ready, they were all seated in their proper places, and served whilst at table by Mrs. Hadfield and the children, who waited upon them with the kindest condescension. The young ladies had been employed, for a week before, in making a few articles of a useful kind, to be bestowed as rewards to the most deserving. The little Patty, who conducted her blind grandmother, received a frock of neat printed cotton, which was presented by Fanny, who, for the first time in her life, tasted the delight of making others

happy by her own exertions. Maria had several caps and shirts of her own making, which she gave to those who had young children; whilst Robert and his cousin Edward were allowed to give to the boys of nearly their own age, a pair of warm worsted stockings.

Mr. Hadfield, by the assistance of the clergyman of the parish, had promoted the establishment of a charity-school, and he took this opportunity of examining the progress of those children who enjoyed its benefit. None went without their reward.

The afternoon was rendered cheerful by a few rustic tales and entertaining stories; and the company

separated at a moderate hour, each one grateful for the favour he had received, and sensible of the advantages of serving so good a master.

The next day a party of young people, the sons and daughters of the neighbouring farmers, were invited to partake of Christmas fare. On this occasion the entertainment was ordered in a different manner to that on the preceding day, when the guests consisted of ploughmen and hungry children, who seldom enjoyed a full meal of meat. Mrs. Hadfield then covered her table with substantial pieces of beef, and solid plum-puddings, which to them were

a luxury that rarely fell to their share; but when she invited those who were daily indulged with the blessings of plenty and variety, she made them welcome by providing a more liberal entertainment than usual, adding many dainties that consist of the produce of a farm-house.

As soon as her early breakfast was finished, Fanny and Maria went with her to the hen-roost, where they found plenty of eggs. Fanny was so much delighted with Guinea-fowls, ducks, geese, pigeons; and common fowls, with a beautiful peacock and hen, that flocked round them in the poultry-yard, that she reluctantly complied with Mrs. Hadfield's re-

quest to return to the house. But they had no leisure to remain there at this time, having much to do to prepare for their guests.

They proceeded to the dairy, where her surprise was again excited by the large flat dishes, filled with milk. Her kind aunt showed her how to skim the cream from the top of the milk, and explained to her, that when the cream was put into the churn, and turned round with a regular motion, it became butter.

Having admired the great nicety and order of the dairy, they took away with them a large bowl of cream, when, with the eggs they had brought from the poultry-yard,

a lump of fine fresh butter churned that morning, and some curd turned with runnet, (which is made from the stomach of a calf, and causes the milk to curdle,) they were provided with materials for many good things.

Mrs. Hadfield prepared all things necessary, and set the girls to work, to make whip-syllabubs, custards, and cheese-cakes. Maria was set to whip the cream for the syllabubs, and Fanny to beat the eggs for the custards; for Mrs. Hadfield thought it necessary to teach these girls how to do every thing useful in a family.

The company consisted of a number of young persons and their parents,

assembled to commemorate the festival by innocent merriment, and the harmony of good neighbourhood. Fanny never enjoyed herself more, though it was very different from the formal visiting of London. There was less restraint, but more sincerity and good-humour. Every one endeavoured to contribute to the general amusement. Among the guests was a gentleman who had the peculiar faculty of throwing his voice into any part of the room he pleased. Whilst they were sitting, listening attentively to a narrative related by a lady, they were startled by the sound of the barking of a little dog, in one corner

of the parlour. Every one turned round to seek the animal from which the noise was supposed to proceed, but as no dog could be found, the noise seemed unaccountable. Whilst they were conjecturing the cause of their disturbance, a cat was heard to mew in the opposite corner: up jumped the children, and ran to the spot, but no cat was there.

The company rose in surprise, each one desirous of accounting for such an extraordinary fact, when poor Fanny was exceedingly startled by a voice close at her ear, saying: "Miss, you did not come into the country to see only those things that are well known to you." She turned her

head round, but saw nobody, and at the same moment, heard a voice from her cousin's pocket, saying: "Do not be surprised, I am come to play a Christmas gambol with you."

This excited astonishment, almost to terror, till Mr. Hadfield, fearing the jest would become too serious, explained the cause of the whole, by telling them, that Mr. Vernon was a *ventriloquist;* that is, that he had acquired the strange power of imitating a variety of sounds, and making them appear to proceed from any place he chose.

Being now convinced that the whole had been a deception, they entreated him to exert his wonderful

art for their amusement, which he did, in various ways, to their great satisfaction. The boys tried in vain to imitate him: it required the nicest ear, and the greatest flexibility of voice, besides long habit and attention.

Their curiosity being satisfied with Mr. Vernon's talent, Mr. Hadfield proposed amusing them with a phantasmagoria. For this purpose, he and his son retired to another room, over the door of which he fastened a piece of silk, and afterwards, having put out the lights, he summoned the company to stand in the hall, when they observed a figure of a man ploughing reflected on the silk. At

first it appeared extremely small, not more than six inches high, and then gradually increased to three feet. At one time it appeared to advance, and then to recede.

The younger part of the guests were extremely entertained, but could not account for what they saw, till Mr. Hadfield desired them to walk into the room where he was, and showed them the means by which he performed this apparent wonder. He had a small tin box, which held a lamp; the light, which passes through a convex piece of glass placed in a tube fixed in the front of the box, being strongly thrown on a slip of ground glass, passed through the

transparent painting of the figure, by which the image was reflected upon the piece of silk, in the manner they had seen.

Maria could not comprehend how the figure became larger or smaller, nearer or more distant, as her father chose to make it.

"That, my dear," said he, "depends on the distance of the lantern from the piece of silk; for the size of the image must increase as the lantern is carried back, because the rays come in the shape of a cone; and as no part of the screen is visible, the figure appears to be formed in the air, and to move further off as it be-

comes smaller, or to approach as it increases in size."

This being explained, Robert brought out all his treasures; amongst which was a multiplying glass, flat on the side which was presented to the eye, but cut into numerous surfaces on the other side, each reflecting the same object, and affording a multitude of pictures or images at the same time. He next placed a large china bowl in the middle of the table, nearly filled with water, on which swam a pair of beautiful swans, formed of white wax, which followed his call as often as he presented them with a piece of bread.

Edward, surprised at the obedience

of the waxen birds, desired he might be indulged with feeding them; but he had not the same influence over them: they neglected his invitation. He was vexed that he could not succeed as well as his cousin, and begged that Robert would tell him why they did not come to the bread when he held it.

"Because," said Robert, "you have not the same means of attracting them that I have." And seeing his cousin mortified at his inferiority, he generously explained the phenomenon, and showed him that he had a magnet concealed in the bread, which attracted a large needle placed in the body of the swan.

"What is a magnet?" said Edward.

"It is a piece of steel that has been well rubbed with the loadstone, and has imbibed from it the property of attracting iron to itself."

"The loadstone," said Mr. Hadfield, "is a dark, brown, mineral body, that not only has the power of attracting iron, but the still more valuable one of always turning towards the north; by which sailors are directed to find their way across the pathless ocean, and travellers to guide their course through deserts, otherwise impassable. It is about five hundred years ago since the pro-

perties of this curious stone were discovered; but it is not known, with certainty, to whom mankind are indebted for this discovery. A story has been told, but I will not vouch for its truth, that a country fellow, with nails in his shoes, walking over a hill that contained loadstone, felt himself suddenly fastened to the ground, and that this incident first made known its properties.

A magic-lantern was next displayed, which is made in a similar manner to that used for the phantasmagoria, with this difference only, that the figures were painted on transparent, instead of ground glass, and reflected on a sheet hung against the wall, in-

stead of the piece of silk. After the ludicrous figures of Punch and his wife had been exhibited, a tiger-hunt was represented; then, dresses of different nations,—Turks, Arabs, Egyptians, American Indians, &c.

The whole store of the magic-lantern being exhausted, the rest of the evening, till supper-time, passed in guessing enigmas and charades. Supper being ordered at an early hour, the visitors were preparing to depart, to which Mr. Hadfield made no opposition, as he had determined to finish the festivities of the day by a pleasure not in the least expected. As soon as the front door was opened, a beautiful fire-work presented itself

in the court-yard:—Catherine-wheels, flower-pots, and fountains, accompanied with squibs and rockets, closed the entertainment.

The guests retired much pleased with their reception, but not till they had obtained a promise from Mr. and Mrs. Hadfield, of passing Twelfth-night with them in return.

In the intervening time, Mr. Hadfield and the boys generally spent the mornings in walking over the farm, looking at the workmen in their different departments, and seeing whether the cattle were properly attended. Robert had been taught to plough and sow, and many other things of the same nature; because his father

thought it necessary that he should know how to do those things himself, which hereafter he would have to command others to do, that he might be able to judge how far those under him executed their tasks properly.

Robert was robust and hardy, accustomed to cold and fatigue, of an active disposition, and a clear understanding. Edward, on the contrary, was pale and puny, shivered at every blast, and tired before they had reached half their walk. Robert was a good horseman, and could ride many miles with ease: his cousin had never mounted a horse, but was desirous of trying to ride a little

poney that belonged to Robert. Mr. Hadfield proposed a ride to a distant market, in order to dispose of some corn. The two boys were to be his companions, and all things being prepared, they set off in high spirits, except that fear was too evidently marked upon the countenance of Edward, who was so little accustomed to horse-exercise. The poney was extremely gentle, but his rider was so awkward, that he could scarcely guide the reins. Robert, with the greatest good-nature, took the utmost pains to teach him how to manage his horse; and having come to a piece of bad road, that he saw disconcerted his pupil, he

*Edward on Horseback.*

dismounted, and walking on foot, led the poney for more than a mile. Example and kindness had an excellent effect. Edward took more courage, and before he returned to London, was able to ride on full gallop.

As soon as they arrived at the market-town, Mr. Hadfield transacted his business; for, according to his maxim, business was always to be preferred to pleasure. When he had sold his corn to his satisfaction, he told the boys he was now at their service, and would show them any thing that was worth their observation. He first led them to the church, which was a plain, neat build-

ing, adapted to the sacred purpose of its design. They walked amongst the tomb-stones, and read the epitaphs, which afforded them this striking lesson—that young and old, rich and poor, wise and ignorant, were alike exposed to the shaft of death. The boys looked thoughtful for a little while; but their uncle told them that the good had no cause to dread the change of condition which raised them to a state of felicity, secure from those evils to which all are subject in our present state of existence.

He led them from the churchyard to a tannery, at a little distance, where they had an opportu-

nity of observing the process of that manufacture. They saw the hides of the different kinds of animals, oxen and calves, hanging up to dry. Others had been soaked for some time in pits, of which there were many in the yard, filled with a liquor prepared by steeping oak-bark in water, by which the hair was easily scraped from the hide, and the hide rendered more firm. Some were in a forwarder state, and by being repeatedly steeped, were almost converted into leather; and others were completed.

The different kinds of leather, remarked Mr. Hadfield, serve for different uses: those of the ox-hide

make collars, harness, &c.; whilst that of the calf is appropriated to shoes; and the more tender skins of the sheep, to make covers for books.

Edward had received a very instructive lesson at this place; but as there remained some time before it was necessary to return to the inn to dinner, Mr. Hadfield took his nephew to a large flour-mill that stood on the borders of the town. Edward mounted the ladder with a degree of palpitation; for as the sails were turning round with great swiftness, from the briskness of the wind, the mill vibrated so much, that he almost feared it would fall; but as he observed the millers go up and

down with large sacks of flour upon their backs, he ascended with a tolerably firm step, and concealed his apprehensions from his companions.

Having entered the mill, Robert took great pains to show his cousin every part of the machinery, which was set in motion by the turning of the sails; especially the two large millstones, between which the corn was crushed till it became flour. All was new to Edward. He had never seen a windmill before, except in a picture: he gaped and stared with wonder. Stunned with the noise and the shaking of the mill, he felt confused, and at first could scarcely

distinguish one object from another. In a little time he grew more accustomed to his situation, and was able to comprehend Robert's explanation of the uses of the different parts. In order to make it still clearer to him, Mr. Hadfield proposed taking him to a water-mill, because the works in the inside were nearly the same, the principal distinction being on the outside: the one was turned by sails moved by the wind; the other, by wheels forced round by the water.

This day's ride enlarged Edward's ideas a great deal, and gave him an insight into the nature of things, of which before he only knew the names.

*The Old Soldier.*

As they were crossing a wide heath on their return home, the wind blew very sharply, and the snow began to fall. Edward, unaccustomed to exposure to the cold, wished to be at home, and buttoned up his great coat close to his throat. Here they met with an old soldier, who had received a severe wound in his side, and was travelling with his knapsack on his back, but apparently with great difficulty and fatigue. The storm beat fiercely on him. He pursued his way, however, with a slow and weary step, till he met the party on horseback, when halting, he advanced towards them, with his hat in his hand, beseeching charity.

Edward, accustomed to the herd of idle beggars that swarm in the streets of London, had been taught to repel them rather roughly, and was beginning a reproof in the usual style, but was mildly reprimanded by his uncle, who told him there was a wide distinction between the slothful and the unfortunate. "This poor fellow," said he, "has suffered severely: his white locks show that he is no longer young, and his wound that he has undergone hardships. My friend," continued he, "have you far to go?" "Yes, Sir, many a long mile. My family live in Hertfordshire; at least they did when I left them, which is now nearly seven years

ago. As I draw near home, my heart beats to know whether my wife and my boys are alive. Glad shall I be to rest my weary limbs among them. The hope of meeting gives me strength, or I should never reach the end of my journey."

"Well," said the kind-hearted farmer, "you cannot walk all night through this wind and snow. My house is only a mile off. Return with us: I will provide you with a supper and a comfortable bed. You shall depart at day-break; and you will be better able to reach your friends by this refreshment."

"Heaven bless you, master," said the soldier, "I did not intend to halt

till I got to my own village; but I cannot refuse your kind offer."

The moment he accepted the proposal, Robert dismounted and insisted that he should ride his horse to the farm. The soldier was overpowered by this unexpected kindness from a child. Mr. Hadfield rejoiced to see that his son, though so young, knew how to feel for others, and was willing to assist them by giving up his own gratification.

Edward looked surprised and ashamed, and felt that his cousin was superior to him. He was more to be pitied than blamed. He had been ill-taught, but was not ill-natured. He resolved to make all

the amends in his power for his churlishness, by every little officious attention. As soon as they got home, he put the soldier's knapsack in a safe place, filled his tobacco-box, and brought him a clean pipe and a mug of ale.

The children now flocked round the kitchen fire, to hear the soldier's adventures. He had served in many parts of the continent: had been at Gibraltar, Malta, Spain, and Portugal. Here he had received his wound; and, being no longer able to endure the fatigues of war, was permitted to return home.

"How came you to go?" said Maria.

"It was a hard struggle," said the soldier, "between leaving my family and following my master. I loved him as well as my own son. My father, and his father before him, had lived upon the estate, and had been tenants to his father and grandfather. I was strong and active; and knowing how well I loved him, when his regiment was ordered abroad he wished me to go as his orderly man. I consented, and many difficulties we encountered together. The worst of all was the illness of my dear mistress. They doated upon one another: so she would not be left behind. She endured many fatigues and hardships, which broke her con-

stitution; so that, when the fever took her, there was but little hope. The doctors tried all their skill, for she was extremely beloved; besides, every body pitied her, for the sake of her three helpless babes. All their care was vain: they could not save her life. When my master perceived that the beloved of his soul was gone for ever, his deep grief could not be concealed; but he bore it with manly resolution, hiding the trickling tears when the children asked why mamma did not come back. How my heart bled for him. With three motherless infants, in the midst of a foreign country, he was under orders to march with his regiment. Not know-

ing which to obey, the call of duty as a soldier, or as a father, he asked leave to carry his children to England; but it could not be granted. 'Never mind, my dear friend,' said the generous Portuguese nobleman, in whose house he was billeted: 'cease to grieve, unfortunate Englishman. Leave your infants with me. There are my three daughters: they shall each discharge the duties of a mother to one of them, and I will be a father to the whole.' His daughters willingly undertook the charge. This was too much for my poor master: he could not speak; but, bursting into tears, hastened out of the room. It was a sad day when

we parted; but I longed to return, and pass my last days with my wife and children."

The young people were much affected with his story, and collected several shillings from their little store, to carry him home. At parting, he wished many blessings on his benefactors.

They continued for some time after this without any particular occurrence. Mr. and Mrs. Hadfield took care to employ the children usefully, some hours every morning and afternoon. They read entertaining books, wrote each a copy, or cast up a sum. The young ladies did a little needle-work, and assisted in domestic

affairs. At first Fanny and Edward thought it hard to be employed in the holidays; but their aunt convinced them that they would enjoy their amusements the more for a little serious application, and that it was folly for any one to waste a whole day in idleness. In a short time they became so well reconciled to Mrs. Hadfield's rules, that they confessed they had never spent any holidays so pleasantly.

The weather changed to a clear frost, which allowed them to walk abroad. In one of these excursions they called upon old blind Mary Norton, and found her affectionate grand-daughter busy in giving her

her dinner. She had spread a neat cloth over the table, and had cut her meat into small pieces. On seeing her guests, she rose and set chairs for them. Mrs. Hadfield desired she would go on with her task, as if they were not present. She then fed the old woman in such a pretty manner, and with so much tenderness, that the little girls were more delighted with her than before, and resolved to profit by her example, and behave in future with more affection and obedience towards their parents. Fanny, in particular, reproached herself with having often behaved impatiently to her grandmother, who was subject to violent rheumatic pains, and some-

times was a little peevish. Thought she to herself, this little girl, who has nobody to instruct her, behaves far better than I do: she seems never tired with waiting on her grandmother, whilst I have often preferred any trifling amusement to attending on mine; but when I go back to London, I will remember Patty, and make amends for my past misconduct, by doing every thing I can for her.

A large book was laid upon a small table, in one corner of the room. Fanny asked what it was, and was answered, that it was the Bible.

"Yes," said the old woman, "my

good Patty reads a chapter to me every morning and evening: she spares no pains to render my life comfortable."

The inside of the cottage was a novelty to Fanny. She looked at the hour-glass, and the pictures that hung against the white wall. The spinning-wheel attracted her notice beyond any other object: having never seen one before, she desired Patty to show her how it was used. She was surprised to observe with what readiness she twisted the thread. She thought she could do the same, as it appeared very easy; but she found herself much mistaken, as it broke immediately upon her touch.

Maria then sat down, and twisted a tolerable thread; but not nearly so even as when Patty turned the wheel.

"Who taught you to spin," said Fanny.

"My kind grandmother," said she, "before she was blind: she taught me every thing I know."

The party now took their leave.

The poultry-yard frequently afforded Fanny much amusement. She particularly admired the peacock, especially when he spread his brilliant tail, if a gleam of sun-shine happened to enliven him. She one day asked why her aunt had not as many peacocks as chickens.

"The reason is plain, my dear,"

said she: "peacocks are rare in this country: besides, they are expensive to buy, and not so profitable as fowls, because they bring up but small broods, being very difficult to rear. They are not natives of this country, but come from the East Indies, where they are so numerous, that I have heard that hundreds of them are to be seen at a time in the forests, where their splendid colours, in a bright sun-shine, almost dazzle the eyes of the beholder."

"How delightful it must be to walk in those woods," said Fanny.

"Your pleasure would be checked," replied her aunt, "by the fear of wild beasts, which often lurk in the thickets, and devour the poor peacocks."

"How happy am I then," said Maria, "to live where there are no such animals roaming about. I should be terrified to stir, if there were danger of meeting with a lion or a tiger in every bush."

"They do not abound, in such numbers, in inhabited places," replied Mrs. Hadfield; "and seldom approach villages, except driven by hunger to seek for prey. Tigers are the most ferocious: they have been known to make their way even through the roofs of the slightly-built cottages in India; but this does not happen often."

"Oh, how terrible!" said Fanny, "I would not live in India, to be a queen."

"And yet," said Mrs. Hadfield, "millions enjoy a common share of happiness in that country. Providence has wisely balanced his kind gifts, so that every country has its advantages. In our happy country, we have a temperate climate, a soil that will not produce without laborious culture, and no wild beasts. In India, they are subject to violent heat, with a soil so productive, that it yields the most luxuriant harvests; not of rice only, but of the richest fruits and most beautiful flowers: whilst the woods abound with birds of the most exquisite beauty, such as the peacock and the humming-bird; but they also con-

ceal the rapacious tiger and his savage companions."

"I should never sleep in peace," said Maria, "if I thought there was danger of a lion or a wolf lurking under my window. Beautiful birds and fine flowers, though I am very fond of both, would not reconcile me to such a country."

"This conversation," said Mrs. Hadfield, "reminds me of taking you to see Lord Belford's fine collection of stuffed birds."

This kind proposal was mentioned to Mr. Hadfield, who willingly agreed to it. The next morning, the horse was harnessed to the chaise-cart, and the gentlemen attended the party on

horseback. It was but a few miles distant: a fine morning was favourable to the expedition. They reached the house by a long avenue of trees. A servant met them at the door, and conducted them through a grand hall, supported by marble pillars. They followed their guide up a noble staircase, with a ballustrade handsomely gilt, which led to a suite of apartments magnificently furnished.

The children gazed with admiration at the different objects that surrounded them, and Robert expressed his opinion, that the owner of such a fine place must be extremely happy.

"He is far otherwise," replied Mr. Hadfield, in a low tone of voice: "he

has a wicked son, who breaks his heart, and destroys all his enjoyment; so you see that happiness and riches do not always go together."

By this time they had reached the room in which the birds were placed. The walls were entirely covered with glass cases, each containing one or more birds. Amongst these were the rose-coloured flamingo, a large bird, with long legs and beautiful plumage, that is often seen sporting in great numbers on some lakes in Africa, and frequents the shores of the Mediterranean sea; and the Argus-pheasant, its feathers covered with eyes something like those of a peacock, only shaded with brown. The pelican,

*The Flamingo.*

with its large pouch, in which it deposits the fish it catches, struck the children particularly. They ran from one to another. Maria was charmed with a hen and chickens, the young ones covered with yellow down, and one of them perched on the back of its mother. In the next box was a duck and her young ones, acompanied by a drake, marked with the finest colours. A nest of young owls made a comical appearance. Near these were white peacocks, their long trains spotted with eyes of the most brilliant azure.

The bird of Paradise, and a pair of humming-birds, with their little nest and tiny eggs, appeared the most

curious to Fanny, who did not imagine there had been any bird so small. She enquired what they fed upon, and was told that they sucked honey out of the flowers. Robert led her away to see an ostrich, which surprised her no less by its great size, than the humming-bird had done by its diminutiveness; the one scarcely larger than a butterfly, the other almost as tall as a man on horseback.

Robert told her, that though the ostrich was so large, it was very harmless; but he would show her a bird that was fierce in its disposition, and to be feared, from the great strength of its claws and its beak—it is the great Norway owl. "Last

year," continued he, "the country about us was overrun with mice; how the owls on the other side of the ocean found it out, I never could discover, but so it was, that they also came in great numbers, and presently thinned the mice."

"It would have been fine sport," said Edward, "to have killed some of them."

"Do you think so," said Robert, with an angry countenance: "I feel no pleasure in giving pain, or tormenting any thing."

"One animal of prey," observed Mr. Hadfield, "destroys another, without compassion or remorse, because it is their nature; but we are

taught, not to feel for our fellow-creatures only, but for every thing that has life. Depend upon what I say—cruelty always is the mark of a coward."

The next case that attracted their notice, contained an eagle, tearing a lamb to pieces: even Edward was disgusted at the sight. A majestic swan was then admired, followed by two grey cygnets. "It is remarkable," said Mrs. Hadfield, "that though the swan is strongly attached to its young when first hatched, yet, as soon as they are able to provide for themselves, they beat them off, and will never suffer more than a pair

of birds to live upon the same stream."

"I have heard that eagles do the same," said Robert; "they live in pairs, and will not allow any intruders into their domain."

After examining the birds with great attention, they were shown a numerous collection of eggs and nests. Such a variety of shape, colour, and size, in the eggs, quite surprised our young naturalists. The nests also varied in form, size, and materials: that of the tailor-bird was curiously sewed up in a leaf, which hung at the end of a slender bough, to secure it from the monkeys, who

would carry off the young birds if they could get at them. There was as great a variety in the materials as in their construction: some were composed of clay, tempered into mortar; others were of moss and twigs, lined with hair and wool. That of the eagle was made of sticks laid across each other, and very flat; whilst that of the wren was covered at the top, and only a small hole left for entrance.

In the centre of the room were cases filled with butterflies and curious insects. In one was arranged a number of the beetle kind, with horny cases, to guard the fine gauze wings which are concealed under

them; in another, foreign butterflies of the most resplendent colours, chiefly from South America, many of them far larger than any found in this country. The rich plumage of the purple emperor was particularly beautiful: others shone with azure and gold, which reflected various hues in different lights. Maria observed to her mother, that there was a dead leaf curled up in one of the boxes, but on looking nearer at it, she was convinced that it was an insect, though so like a leaf as easily to be mistaken for one.

Having been entertained with all these wonders preserved by art, they were shown into an adjoining room,

where was a living chameleon. This creature is something like a lizard, but larger, with a long tail, which it curls up. At one moment it looked green, at another it was brown, and changed its hue from all the gradations of olive to palish yellow. Its head was shaped like a fish, and its eyes very large and projecting: it can turn them so as to see either backward, forward, or on either side; and, what is more extraordinary, can give one eye all these motions, whilst the other is perfectly still. The tongue is half as long as the animal, somewhat like an elephant's proboscis or trunk. It has the power of enlarging itself at pleasure, by puffing itself out

*The Chameleon.*

to a considerable size, swelling even the legs and tail. The change of colour is not easily accounted for, and has given rise to a pretty fable, which Mrs. Hadfield repeated to her young charge, as a lesson against being too positive in their opinions.

"Two travellers met once by accident, and amused themselves by relating the wonders they had seen. The one described the chameleon, and declared that it was of a bright green, which the other flatly contradicted, asserting that it was black. Neither would give up the point. Words ran high, and the dispute could not be settled, till a third joining them, pro-

nounced that they were both in the wrong, for that he had seen the creature, and it was white. In fact, they were all right, for the animal had assumed these different colours, when seen by these three travellers."

They were now invited to see the hot-houses. Here their eyes were again feasted with a vast profusion of foreign shrubs, many of them in full bloom, at a season when the native plants in the garden bore a withered appearance, and were covered with snow. The oranges hung like balls of gold, whilst the same trees displayed a number of fragrant blossoms. The roses were so plentiful, it looked like summer. Heaths, geraniums,

and other flowers less common, intermingled their lively hues with the dark green leaves. They had the gratification of seeing the tea-tree, which grows in China; and the tobacco, which abounds in the West Indies.

Having fully satisfied their curiosity, they were obliged to take leave of this delightful spot, and return home, where they found full entertainment for the evening, in conversing upon the vast variety of objects that they had seen in their morning's excursion. The usual employments of the next day seemed rather flat, after so much pleasure, which led Mrs. Hadfield to remark, that the

mind is apt to be weakened by too much diversion. Pleasure should be used like seasoning, little in quantity, and only as an excitement to industry, when wearied by too much application.

Edward and Fanny had been five weeks at their uncle's, the holidays were past, and it grew time to think of sending them and their cousins to school. These five weeks had been spent so pleasantly, and so profitably, that they had greatly improved, both in knowledge and behaviour, and were grown so much attached to Robert and Maria, that they would gladly have never been separated from them; but they were obliged

to submit to the orders of their parents, and make preparation for their departure.

All parties were out of spirits for several days before that on which their places were taken in the stage-coach. The morning at length arrived, when the cousins were obliged to take leave, not without many tears on both sides, and as many promises of returning as soon as they could get leave to do so. Mr. Hadfield made each of them a present of a useful book, and sent a letter with them to their father, saying that they had conducted themselves so agreeably during the Christmas gambols, that he hoped to have the pleasure of

their company at the Midsummer holidays, when he would show them the manners of a farmer's life in the gay season of summer.

This invitation reconciled them a little to their separation. They arrived safe in London, which appeared to them more smoky and gloomy than formerly, from comparing it with the open fields of Hawthorn Hall. Their parents received them joyfully, and were highly pleased with their improvement, and the narrative of all their adventures. Robert and Maria were also dispatched to school, where they soon settled to their usual course of lessons, hoping, by their industry

and attention, to repay, with grateful obedience, the many pleasures they had enjoyed in the Winter Vacation.

THE END.

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